THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) The possibilities of one tiger or the other having some infection, in a particular zoo can not be ruled out.

(b) Treatment is generally provided for the diseases that assume pathogenic dimensions.

(c) The rules stipulate that all animals in the zoos should be periodically screened against the parasites and prophylactics provided to the animals found positive.

Review of Wild Life Conservation Policy

2822. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to review the Wild Life/Conservation Policy and probe into irregularities in zoos and protected sanctuaries where thousands die unnatural deaths inspite of several employees to look after the animals;

(b) if so, the details of the proposals; and

(c) if not, how the corrupt officials, who are in league with wild life Mafia will be penalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Cases of unnatural deaths of 13 tigers in Nandankanan Zoo, about 48 peacocks in Morena District of Madhya Pradesh and 1 lion in Gir Forests have been reported recently. Examination of the cases has revealed that the cause of unnatural death is technical in nature.

(c) There is no conclusive evidence to prove connivance of officials in the episode.

Decline in Country's Forest Cover

2823. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether according to a new UNFPA study the India's forest cover has declined by about 12.5 percent in the last 50 years;